

OUTGOING MESSAGE

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WHI2WH 740327

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MESSAGE REFERENCE NUMBER

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SOURCE REF:

ROUTING	1	4	7	10
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ITEM NO: WH-84 DATE: 27 MARCH 1974
SUBJECT: ADMIRAL GAYLER DISCUSSES SOVIET ASIAN FORCES

IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE MARCH 25 US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT ADMIRAL NOEL GAYLER COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE US PACIFIC COMMAND MADE SEVERAL STATEMENTS ON THE SIZE AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE SOVIET NAVY IN THE PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEANS.

THE ADMIRAL GAVE A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SOVIET MFORCES IN THE FAR EAST INCLUDING "OVER 40 DIVISIONS OPPOSITE THE CHINESE BORDER"--338 DIVISIONS IS THE OSR FIGURE--AND "SOME 300 SHIPS IN THE SOVIET PACIFIC FLEET". THE FEBRUARY 1974 DIA ORDER OF

4 BATTLE LISTS 53 MAJOR COMBATANTS, 323 SMALL COMBATANTS, 201
3 AUXILLIARIES AND 105 SUBMARINES IN THE SOVIET PACIFIC FLEET.

2 IN ADDITION THE ARTICLE STRONGLY IMPLIES THAT THE SOVIET
1 NAVY HAS OR WILL SOON HAVE PORT AGREEMENTS FOR ROUTINE SUPPORT

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DIA review(s) completed.

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OF ITS COMBAT SHIPS IN SOMALIA, INDIA, SRI LANKA, BANGLADESH AND SOUTHERN YEMEN, WHEREAS THE SOVIET NAVY IS KNOWN TO HAVE SUCH AN AGREEMENT ONLY IN SOMALIA AND IS NOT LIKELY TO GAIN SPECIAL PRIVILEGES IN THE OTHER COUNTRIES SOON.

THE ADMIRAL ALSO COMMENTS THAT HE BELIEVES THE DISTANCE TO THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH THE SUEZ CANAL CLOSED IS THE "PRINCIPAL (SIC) REASON THEY HAVEN'T SENT A LARGER FORCE TO THE AREA". THE RECENT SNIE ON THE EFFECTS OF OPENING THE CANAL POINTS OUT THAT THE INITIATION OF SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE AND GRADUAL INCREASE IN THE STILL SMALL NUMBER OF SOVIET COMBATANTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN FORCE HAS OCCURRED SINCE THE CLOSING OF THE CANAL, AND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS WHETHER OR NOT THE CANAL IS OPEN. THE SMALL FORCE HAS BEEN AUGMENTED BY 3 TO 5 SURFACE SHIPS AND SUBMARINES DURING CRISIS PERIODS. THE MAJOR ADVANTAGE TO THE SOVIET NAVY FROM THE CANAL OPENING WILL BE SHORTENED LOGISTIC LINES AND, UNDER CERTAIN LIMITED CONDITIONS, ABILITY TO AUGMENT COMBAT FORCES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA FLEETS.

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